

APRASIA SMITHI A NEW WORM-LIZARD (PYGOPODIDAE) FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By G. M. STORR, Western Australian Museum.

Holotype.—R34325 in Western Australian Museum, collected by Mr. W. J. Marsh on July 13, 1969 at Kalbarri (Lat. 27° 43' S, Long. 114° 10' E).

Diagnosis.—Distinguishable from all other forms of *Aprasia* by black head and tip of tail.

Distribution.—Known from one specimen from the mouth of the Murchison River.

Description.—Head shields as in *A. r. repens* except for (1) larger rostral (extending back half-way to frontal), (2) nasal in moderately broad contact with second labial, and (3) preocular very small, crescent-shaped and almost separated from prefrontal by deep and narrow anterolateral extension of supraocular. "Canthus rostralis" fairly sharp. Scale rows 12 at mid-body. Length 162 mm. (tail 69).

Head, fore-neck and tip of tail glossy black. Remainder of upper surface much paler: anteriorly orange-yellow, then orange-brown and finally fawn. Six series of dark dorsal and dorsolateral spots, one to a scale; innermost (paravertebral) black; two outer series on each side dark grey, anterior spots modified into V-shaped marks (apex pointing backwards). Lips white, except for posterior labials through which black of temples is continuous with black of centre of throat. Remainder of lower surface whitish.

Remarks.—This elegant species is named after my assistant, Mr. Lawrence A. Smith.

A. smithi agrees with *A. striolata* in the location of the nasal suture. In other respects it is more like *A. repens*: the very slender body, elongation of snout, and fusion of postocular with fourth labial. Of the two subspecies of *repens* it agrees with the nominate race in number of scale rows, but in the extremely long rostral *smithi* resembles *rostrata* of the Monte Bello Islands (in nominate *repens* the rostral reaches back considerably less than half-way to the frontal).

For a thorough revision of the genus *Aprasia*, see H. W. Parker (*Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)*, Zoology, 3, 1956: 365-385).

NOTES ON THE BIOLOGY OF VARANUS GOULDI FLAVIRUFUS

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The Sand Goanna, *Varanus gouldi*, is perhaps the most familiar of the Australian monitor lizards. Yet relatively little, most of it anecdotal, has been reported concerning its behaviour, natural history, and ecology. The species occurs from coast to coast across Australia, and lives along seashores, in most forests, and in all habitats of the central deserts, including the Nullarbor Plain. The present note deals only with the inland race *flavirufus*, described by Mertens (1958), and is based upon 64 specimens in my collection.*

White (1952) reported that *gouldi* eat nestling birds, and pastoral people know that it will eat dead sheep and other carrion. Thompson and Hosmer (1963) assert that *flavirufus* is not arboreal, but that when hunted it seeks refuge in burrows in the sand. (Although this is usually true, on several occasions I have "treed" these goannas). One specimen, after being chased down and dug out of a burrow, assumed a peculiar threatening

* Now deposited in the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.